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Joint Chiefs' Opposition To Dense Pack Minimized

By DON WATERS

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A Pentagon official sought Wednesday to minimize opposition from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the "dense pack" method of basing MX missiles, saying the service leaders had not studied it sufficiently.

Richard D. DeLauer, undersecretary of defense for research and engineering, said the same could be said of most members of Congress, who voted last December to deny \$988 million in production funds for the intercontinental nuclear weapon.

"They (the chiefs) did not spend enough time finding out about it either," DeLauer told a House Armed Services subcommittee.

DeLauer testified on behalf of the Defense Department's request for \$29.6 billion in multi-year spending authority on research and development projects for fiscal 1984. This is \$7 billion higher than the current budget.

Rep. William L. Dickinson, R-Ala., said he and other sympathetic members are having a difficult time selling constituents for such higher military spending because the Pentagon has classified so much of the information on the threat posed by the Soviet Union.

In response, DeLauer said the Pentagon on Monday will publish a new version of its unclassified 1981 brochure "Soviet Military Power," this time showing how U.S. forces compare.

DeLauer said it was "a pretty tortuous path" to get military intelligence information past the CIA, the White House and other agencies for public distribution.

Rep. Robert Badham, R-Calif., said that during a trip to Europe, he obtained from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization a "terrific little (unclassified) booklet with force comparisons and all this stuff I've been trying to get declassified over here."

He said he found the situation "ridiculous."

DeLauer said sources and methods by which the United States obtained information on the Soviet military could be compromised if certain information was released.

But he suggested that Badham take his views to intelligence officials and perhaps Congress and the administration together "can start chipping away at this classified whale."

EXCERPTED